# How Capital Police Solved Mystery of the Slaying of Trinity College Boy

# Fraudulent Confession Failed to Throw Police Off Criminal's Tracks

By LEO GIBSON.

"I did it-yes, I killed and robbed Richard!"

Two persons—a man and a boy—each made this conession of having slain and robbed Richard H. Duvall, fifeen years old, protege of the Sisters of Notre Dame at Prinity College, Brookland, D. C .- a confession which each nust have known as he uttered it meant death on the galows-by the hangman's noose-when presented to a jury.

Each of them told a different story, with minute demade him promises; that they dewaved it, as he shouted to Captain
that he had a rival. He said his rival
planned it all. I just went along. I

grived him of clothing to keep his
Judge: "I'll bet that's Duvall who had threatened his life if he ever carried the pietot, handed it to Hawails, of not only circumstances which led up to the killing, body warm. out of the actual firing of two shots which ended the life of Duvall, a lad with a promising career.

#### Boy Comrade Confesses.

ig, husky plain clothes and uniform get the money. olicemen, although innocent of any onection with the crime, declared hat he had fired the shots which

leve me when I told them the truth— thing unforseen develops. hat I had not killed Richard," exad told the truth. I told them I had o connection with the death of my ard!" riend. But they would not believe ie. For hours they questioned mehey took me to the scene of the urder. They showed me the blood as matted on the grass where his ody was found pierced with two bul-They told me I knew all about and it-the questioning-any longer ould let me go home, I told them: Yes, I did it-I killed and robbed

Then Farm Hand Confesses. Three days later Charles Ross Webter, forty-five, overseer of the

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heat when appear

to buy and use.

want it.

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In a dark, gloomy room at the fessed to having slain and robbed Webster had made to him three days automobile, Captain Judge went to it was empty. When I gave it to him Centh precinct police station a pale- Duvall, declaring that he had delib- after his arrest as a suspect in the the District morgue. The body was it had five cartridges in the chamwoods near the Catholic University, id, pal of the murdered Trinity Col- to rob him of his month's salary and some heat. "What do you mean by ege employe-cowered by the pres-other savings-\$29-and to kill him third degree? No! Webster sent for

ricted before a jury in Criminal Di- Police Headquarters." vision No. 1. Justice Gould presiding, nuffed out the life of his friend and of the murder of Duvall. He will be is the process of examining a prisoner Duvall. sentenced by Justice Gould to pay the for the purpose of obtaining informa-They—the police—would not be- penalty for the crime unless some-

It was only after three days of laimed Betz to the writer. "They persistent and severe questioning and ly treated. He said Webster had maje they insisted I 'tell the truth!' I that Webster confessed and declared: he was willing to confess-probably "I did it-I killed and robbed Rich-

But after the arrest of Webster, rom Richard's death wounds which amination after the confession had been made by Betz, the detectives and that he knew an about the truth. uniformed policemen began to see murder and that they wanted that the youth's admission of guilt ster and convinced of his guilt, the othing but 'the truth,' I couldn't did not stand up-that the evidence police eliminated Betz, who confessed and in desperation and believing they had against him would not be to at least six detectives, only to resolid in desperation and believing they given much credence in court. They pudiste the admissions when it was around trying to check up his story taken into custody.

The twelve jurors, who for three orm of Trinity College, also con- the police evidence and the arguments death.

re than anything on earth?

believed him guilty of the crime no trace of the lad could be found. which stirred Washington to its depths. It was one of the most youth found slain might be that of brutal in the annals of the Washington Police Department.

Charged Third Degree. charged the police with using the

"Now, didn't you put him through the third degree to get this confes- it is!" he exclaimed. sion?" shouted Attorney Smith, as De-tective Sergt. Edward J. Kelly, of pay particular significance to the no to shoot anyone. Police Headquarters, was testifying volunteered identification of the body. concerning the admission of guilt that Taking one of the employes in his tol to me," continued Hawkins, "but

"Third degree," rejoined Kelly, with Duvall, nce and persistent questioning of if necessary in his determination to me and volunteered to confess—and we never threatened to put him in a Last Thursday Webster was con- sweat box-there is no such thing at

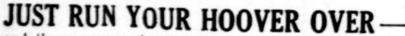
tion. It is sometimes accompanied ter disappeared. by severe treatment. Detective Kelly

Obtaining the confession from Webthey had against him would not be to at least six detectives, only to remost logical suspect that had been and the money which was stolen from conflictions. This assured the police \$17 in his pockets when arrested. the right shoe of Duvall after he had of the possibility of his guilt. It was It was on the night of June 7 last

Two days later his bulletpierced body was discovered in the ployed. versity by Edward Wall, a colored must have had another pistol. nearby road. Capt. Thomas Judge, of the Tenth precinct, was summoned police that he was telling the truth and found a mystery on his hands, was fruitless-at least until a cir-He sent Duvall's body, unidentified cumstantial chain of evidence had that time, to the District morgue.

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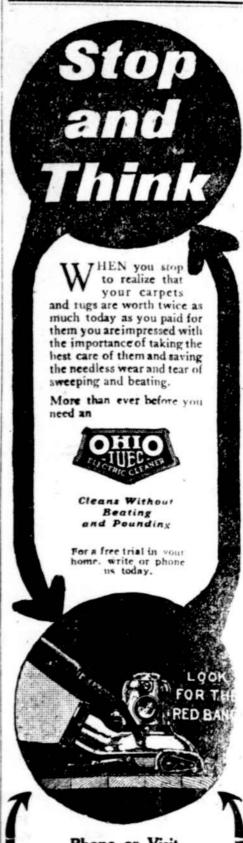
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the balance, brought a verdict with- some clothing, in fifteen minutes that he was guilty of the crime-guilty of first degree sured one of the sisters who clasped

Was Paid Salary. vestigation of the police department began to hum.' Plainclothes and uniprecinct to unravel the brutal crime. They found that on June 7 Duvall had been paid his month's salary, and that he had left the college about 5



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"But, I'll be back tomerrow," he as-They realized-these twelve his hand and wished him well. But, age?" asked Webster, without a quivtalesmen-that the penalty for the he did not come back on the morrow. Fears were entertained for him by What might have happened had the sisters when he failed to put in an this boy of sixteen, who conjured up appearance at the college, as Richard in his imaginative brain a picture was a boy of his word. Captain Judge story of how he had shot, killed, and was asked to make an investigation. obbed his friend and comrade-his He found Richard had never been to had not seen his daughter for ten enstant companion whom he loved Baltimore. It also was revealed that years-no, not then. He did not tell he was not seen at a drugstore in Betz's father is dead, his mother is H street, where he was to buy his a hospital, and he is employed at ticket to go to the Monumental city. lumbus, Ohio, for burglary. He would the Marist College. The fathers never A city-wide search was instituted, but not tell them anything about his

Suspecting that the body of the Duvall, Captain Judge drove over to Trinity College on June 10 to get one ster when he was on trial last week, District Morgue in an effort to identify the body.

ing the confession of guilt. He rushed Webster with a copy of a for Baltimore, he had loaned the charged that the detectives had Washington morning newspaper, con- weapon to Webster. threatened to put Webster in a "sweat taining an account of the finding of box" if he did not confess; that they the dead youth, in his hand. He he was going to visit a woman and

"Yes, that's Duvall's body-I bet

#### Betz Owned Pistol.

tain Judge learned that Betz was an was afraid I would shoot somebody, intimate friend of Duvall-that Betz he said." had owned a pistol, that he had displayed it to employes at the col-Rumor had it that Betz and

took him into custody for examinaexamination at Police Headquarters conflicting statements. When trapped tion. He was quizzed and quizzed that Duvall left the college ostensibly to go to visit his aunt in Belthat he knew all about the crime and He was asked to tell all about it.

Pistol Taken From Him.

So, it was figured that if dump of woods near the Catholic Unic Betz had shot and killed his chum, he

youth, who was driving a cart on a! So Betz was prodded to tell the "truth." His attempt to convince the should be said that not all of the In short order the wheels of in- vinced of the boy's guilt-or, at least policemen and detectives were cona participation in the crime. Some couted the idea of the guilt of the formed men were rushed to the Tenth boy, declaring he was a weak-minded lad who might confess to anything. Betz Broke Down.

> And Betz did confess. After having been persistently urged to "tell the truth" and "it will be better for you to tell the truth," he broke out with the assertion that "yes, he had killed

> At intervals, for hours, he was questioned by detectives after he made the "confession." Some left him, after he recited in minute details how he had gone to the woods with Duvali. shot and killed him after a quarrel and then taking his money from his shoe, shaking their heads in doubt. But a confession is a confession to

> detectives. They were not certain of his innocense-and he had confessed. He confessed to all the detectives wanted to know, except what he had done with the death dealing weapon that had taken the young life of Duvall, and the money that he had stolen from the boy. At that moment he was the most logical person to have committed the crime. But after, in lurid descriptions, he told each of the detectives in groups and in turn of how he had killed and robbed his chum, Betz, when asked about the pistol and money, would repudiate his former admissions.

### Up Against Stone Wall.

The detectives realized they were up against a stone wall. Without more evidence than the confession. which was persistently repudiated, they realized they could never convict the boy. And finally they gave him up. They became incredulous. They began to doubt the confession. then Webster was taken into

Investigation revealed Betz had horrowed 10 cents from one of the fathers at Marist College the day after Duvall was killed. Had he robbed Duvall, they concluded, he would not have borrowed the money. but later events turned to Webster. And Betz was then eliminated from

In this dark and dull and gloomy room at the Tenth precinct police station, this boy of undeveloped brain, whose mother is in an asylum, baffled detectives, who racked their brain as to whether or not to believe his con-"Of course, I confessed, They

would not believe me when I told them the truth," said Daniel. "So I lied to satisfy them."

### Searched for New Clues.

With the growing doubt of the guilt f Betz, the detectives hurried back o Trinity College in search of other lues that might help them in unraveling the mystery. Employes were questioned, particularly those with whom Duvall was in daily contact. The detectives were certain that the motive for the killing was robbery. so they sought out those who might have knowledge that it was customary for the lad to keep money in his

It was while the detectives were questioning several employes that Captain Judge recalled the remark made by Webster, overseer at the farm, that he was certain the body found was that of Duvall. So Webster was taken into custody and rushed to the Tenth precinct station. William Hawkins, negro youth, also was

Protested Innocence.

Webster could not explain to the satisfaction of the detectives as to his expressed certainty that the body

of the Government and counsel for o'clock, apparently to go to Balti- found was that of Webster. He as believed that the boy had gone on the boy was known to have had in his Columbus, Ohio, for burglary,

Webster, whose life perhaps hung in more and visit an aunt and to buy well as Hawkins protested innocence his way to Baltimore. of any connection with the crime. "Why should I kill little Richard when I have a daughter, about his told the detectives.

> But the detectives figured during believed he had lied to them. They their questioning of Webster that his proved he had told many confifficting story did not ring true-that he was statements as to his whereabouts on shielding something from them. He did not tell them, of course, that he them that he had been convicted and had served a year in prison at Coearly life.

#### Webster Borrowed Gun.

He denied ever having a revolver He said Hawkins, the negro youth. of the employes, intimate with the had one and that he had warned him Frank S. Smith, counsel for Web- missing boy, to accompany him to the against discharging it in his room. Webster and Hawkins were questioned in separate rooms. Hawkins And, as Captain Judge was talking somewhat reticently admitted that on "third degree" on his client in obtain with one of the the sisters, along the day that Duvall left apparently

> presented himself at the house again. kins, and he fired two shots at Rich-He wanted to take the pistol to protect himself. I let him have the pis- handed me the pistol again, and I tol, but told him to be careflu and put it in my pocket. We then took

immediately identified as that of bers. I asked him what he had done with the cartridges. He said he was toying with the pistol and his 'girl' In the formal investigation, Cap- took them out for safekeeping. She him from the case.

Duvall were together before the lat- Hawkins, the detectives went to Web-So the police went to the Marist the pistol. Later he admitted bor-College where Betz was employed and rowing it. He told the same story to at the Seventh precinct police station the police as to Hawkins. They told and at the First precinct police stahim they would see the woman. asked his every move from the day was discovered he had not been to the woman's home as he had stated- his mother, his daughter-if he had But it is certain that Betz did not have the murder on his conscience—told him by the police. They were not convinced. He was taken from the partial times of anyone who there by the persistent accurations. there by the persistent accusations the college to the scene of the crime. knew him personally and who might confirm his statements of his wherewere they true.

It was learned that he had borrealized they had to start on a new demanded of him to take them to the and attempted alibi. It was found, the few days before Duvall was killed -- not near you at the time," it was sugtack-and Webster seemed to be the spot where he had secreted the pistol detectives told him, to be riddled with an advance on his salary. He had gested. He denied the statement of a man learned that the pistol that Betz who said he saw him with Duvall at owned at one time had been taken 7 o'clock on the night the boy was days last week listened intently to that young Duvail was lured to his from him by one of the Fathers of slain. He declared he left Duvail of the detectives, as he presented Marist College, where he was em- on the lawn on the college, and had some bills, worn and much used which

"I gave him \$2 to buy me a shirt

The detectives began to ply nim with demands for the truth. They

the night that Duvall was slain. Webster Weakened. When the woman he said he had

visited, and who had removed the cartrides from the revolver, had repudiated him, declaring she had not seen him for a week. Webster began to weaken. Others repudiated his statement that he had been seen "You know you killed the boy?

one of the detectives demanded. "You have lied and lied. You know you Webster began to tremble. The dereal slayer, felt he was about to confess. And, he did make a confession.

implicating Hawkins, the negro farm ard, who fell dead. Hawkins then off Richard's shoe and took his money-\$29-and divided it. Then we went back to the college."

Checked Up On Negro. The detectives had been busy checking up Hawkins movement on the night that Duvall had been slain, and they had practically eliminated

The confession made Webster an acessory, even though he did not fire the fatal shots. He was told so. But he remained stubborn and steedfastly adhered to the story that Haw-

kins had killed the boy. tioned further at police headquarters, tion. The detectives played on his sympathies. They asked if he recalled ever lied to either of them. But still he insisted that Hawkins had killed

"You mean to tell us that you carried the pistol, handed it to Hawkins and again took it after he had killed Duyall?" demanded one of the detec-"Yes," rejoined Webster.

"You know you did the shooting yourself, and know that Hawkins was only helped to rob him."

"Is this some of the money you

took from Duvall's shoe?" asked one

"I don't believe you."

"Yes, it looks like it. It is if you money.

Emptied Pistel. "Who took the cartridges out o. the pistol?" asked Inspector Clifford L. Grant, chief of detectives.

"I did," answered Webster. "What did you do with them?" "I threw them into a sewer grating in front of the college."

showed just where he had thrown the cinct police station. shells and cartridges. When they had been recovered he was taken to good his promise. He sent for Kelly Why don't you confess the truth?" of his own guilt.

expert, was taking his finger prints detectives having found that he hat Webster declared:

"You've got me now." "Gotcha? What you mean?" "I was 'pinched' out in Columbus, o I suppose you will find my finger prints on record." And, sure enough, is finger prints were found, and his ecord—that he had been arrested in of a slayer—on the gallows.

had served a year's sentence. while he was in Baltimore,' Webster took it from me-that was Duvall's chilly when in the police cell

night before, and asked Detect Sergeant Kelly to take him out to the college so he could get a cont. were no coat when arrested.

"All right," said Kelly, "come along, and he put Webster in na automobile got the coat, and brought him back to Police Headquarters.

Told Detective Kelly. "When I tell the truth about this Detectives hurried to the college thing I'm going to send for you-I'm and recovered the two empty shells in not going to tell those other detec the sewer, and the other three cart- tives anything. You have been kind riages on the grass near Webster's to me, Detective Kelly." Webster said. rcom. Webster went along and when later taken to the First pre

And he did. That night he made the scene of the crime, but stubbornly and told the story of how he deliberrefused again to make an admission ately planned to rob and kill young Duvall, if necessary, to get posse When taken into the rogue's gallery sion of his salary and savings. He at Police Headquartrs to have his knew Duvail kept his money in the fingerprints and photograph taken, right shoe and that he planned to go Webster began to wince. It was to Baltimore. He said he became der while Sergeant Sandberg, Bertillon perate because of need of funds—the drawn regularly his salary in ad-

vance. cleared the boy who already had conessed to the crime. Webster was convicted on Thus isy. He will probably die the death

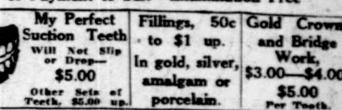
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